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GOD'S FIRST COMMISSION TO MAN OR SCIENCE.

Early in the misty morn of creation, when man, who was about to go forth from the presence of his Creator upon his untried existence upon the earth, stood up at the word of his Maker to receive his birthright. God gave him his benediction and this commission: "Replenish earth, subdue it; and have dominion over every living thing." These were the first recorded words that fell on mortal ear, and they were full of significance.

This commission disclosed to man his mission upon the earth. It revealed to him the fact that peculiar and lofty powers must lie sleeping in his dormant faculties; and that these powers were to be employed in his work of subjugation. And truly the faculties to be employed in this great design were not mere physical faculties, for then the most sacred treasure of his heritage would not only have been beyond the reach of his feeble hand, but his but his birthright would have been to him a most formidable tyrant. For pent up in nature's mystic bosom were forces steeping in wrath which, when loosed from their prison cells would rush with unbridled fury, hurling the lightning across the heavens with incalculable velocity, or driving the terrific winds over the face of the earth, leaving destruction and ruin in their pathway, or over the bosom of the ocean, stirring the mighty deep, and pashing its billows, heaving like mountains, surging towards the sky. There was that mighty mysterious force pervading all nature, which not only impelled the waters down the mountains of the earth, dashing them over the dizzy precipices with thunder-voices, but which held the spheres of the universe in their orbits, impelling them onward in their ceaseless march, with inconceivable power. Yet all these impelling energies of nature were to be subdued and made to become as willing steeds and ministers to man's necessities. All her other treasures were to be brought into requisition by him. But physical power was not his all. The wise author of this commission was also the beneficent Provider of means for its fulfillment.

Swifter on the wings of thought than the lightning athwart the sky, more powerful than the whirlwinds terrific blast, deeper in its penetration than the dark fathomless depths of ocean, loftier in its flight than the canopy of the heavens: Mind, which God in that commission enthroned king of nature, was to be bounded in her dominion only by the bounds of the universe itself.

Reason was to be the means of subjugation. Man's glorious work—the work of investigation.

He was to contemplate the immensity of truth, and dive down amid the hidden and priceless gems of nature. Science was to be his handmaid.

Slowly and silently was she to lead him through the vast corridors of nature in his far reaching search for power to wield the scepter of sacred truth and right divine.

The mission of science is to so thoroughly acquaint man with his birthright—nature and all her varied stores—as to enable him to draw from the whole, severally or collectively, the properties that are capable of advancing human happiness. Heaven's richest blessing has ever attended the efforts of those votaries of science, who, with an insatiate thirst for truth, have devoted the faculties of mind to the investigation of nature's laws and the subjugation of her forces; and each successive step that they have made has added new symbols of power to that triumphant reign of man, over every living thing. Moving system by system, race by race, the conquest of science is setting aside the old, and setting up new civilization. By it earth and sea have been brought under subjection. Science has called forth the hidden and wonder-working forces of nature and made them obedient vassals of the toiler. By it the mountains have given up their treasures and the valleys their wealth; the ocean has strewn at the feet of industry her glittering gems; colleges and universities have sprung up all over the civilized world and man has been elevated from the lowest barbaric ignorance to the highest type of Christian civilization; the industrial arts from rude beginnings have been brought by patience and laborious research to the present state of perfection. Science has accomplished it all, and what are the results to-day?

Without disparaging the great inventions of the past, the mariner's compass, the printing press, the telescope, the steam engine, which have rendered modern civilization possible, it is our boast to-day that we are standing on the very pinnacle of science; that the present epoch surpasses in interest and importance all former achievements of the human mind. The application of steam to land and water navigation, which has practically annihilated distance, has revolutionized the commerce of the world, binding us together throughout the length and breadth of the land, making us one in the ties of friendship and in the associations of trade and emigration. The telegraph and the telephone, virtually annihilating both time and space, thus enabling the nations of the earth to communicate with each other in a moment of time, have the very best interests of the world bound up in their progress. Their mission is emphatically one of peace. They not only speak swiftly but softly. Every throb of the human heart, every tear, every tender anxiety for absent friends may be known in every land in a moment of time. To-day they are swift-

ly uniting the nations of the earth, once cold and hostile, in one common bundle of sympathy and love. The most obtuse observer of to-day can not fail to see that from the beginning every century has been better than that which preceded, that development and progress are the laws of the race; we are living in the very best age of history, standing upon the temple erected by the efforts of other ages, we are standing on the very summit of time. Man has never receded. Nations have decayed, dynasties have perished, governments have expired and races become extinct; yet man has moved, intellectually and morally, onward and upward. And to-day, looking back upon what has been, and knowing what is now, we can see the spirit of progress fixed upon the course of man, and stamped upon the works of art, ever impelling onward and upward the moral, intellectual and physical world, in exact proportion to the development of scientific research.

But when science shall have been the means unto man of bringing all nature into subjection, of taking possession of all her exhaustless stores and filling the land with improvements, "calling forth," as it were, "glory from desolation and life and beauty from the very bosom of death," filling the land with a song like unto Miriam's when it feels the touch of accomplished skill, "and all this shall have been sounded in the ears of the listening multitudes, even then not one half of the divine mission of science will have been told. A higher and nobler mission yet exists. There are infinitely more sublime and noble regions of thought for the human mind to grapple as science leads it from nature's truths to nature's God. In order to true happiness to man kind it is necessary that man know nature's author, his own beneficent Creator. God has impressed himself in Jellibly upon His works; "the heavens declare His glory and the firmament sheweth His handi-work." "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee." Borne on the gentle winds are soft whispers from the throne of heaven. All nature seems impatient to reveal to man her hidden treasures and to crown his efforts with jewels far more precious than the purest gold, and lead him, as if by enchantment, from nature's truths to nature's God. Science like a sparkling rill, bounding in wild delight, reveals new and greater mysteries still.

The soul of the true student of nature, gliding swiftly through the realms of ether and penetrating the shadowy mysteries of the physical world, grappling with the inflexible bars of the universe, furnishes infallible proof that the soul of man naturally aspires from investigation of truth to its fountain head; that it naturally leads from things created to their Creator. Then truly "The soul that looks within for truth

may guess the presence of some unknown heavenliness."

Oh! what joy and ineffable pleasure must the educated and philosophic mind experience to see life in all nature; to converse with rocks and plants as with living beings, and rambling through the mysterious labyrinths of mighty creation, to comprehend and rest in wrapt delight and soul-stirring revelations of the omnipotence, the omniscience, the omnipresence of the eternal God. But attempt after attempt has been made to set the works of God against the word of God and thereby excite jealousies fitted to separate parties who ought to live in closest union. The bombastic infidel, the prating atheist, of to-day, spreading themselves like green bay trees, in contemplating the mysteries of God's providence, deny the truths of revelation and condemn them, or denying the existence of God Himself, ascribe His work to natural causes, do so simply because they cannot comprehend omniscience and grapple with omnipotence. Condemning what they do not comprehend they illustrate the idea expressed by Lord Bacon, "A smattering of philosophy, leads to atheism whereas an adequate acquaintance with it brings them back to religion again." He may have caught the vivid lightning in his unhallowed hand, he may have discovered some of nature's grand principles, or gazing on the sublimity of the heavens, his mind may have been impressed with a feeling of awe, wonder or amazement, and as he dwells upon the grand and lofty thoughts suggested only catches the faint glimpses of the mighty truths which, if he could only comprehend, would be revealed. And then, with these faint and inadequate glimpses of truth, not being content with what he has seen and heard of the word of God, he makes an attempt to scale the giddy heights of imagination and to press into the holy of holies, and presume to say that God is not, because his own mind "has been weighed in the balance and found wanting." But the infidel's shaft has ever fallen harmless at the feet of Christianity. Contrary to all his studious attempts to show that Christianity cannot withstand the light of the age in which we live, the church of God still prevails, sending her light gleaming more brightly than ever before, into the dark corners of earth's remotest bounds.

There is one thing that is to be seriously regretted, because of its far-reaching and damaging effects on both religion and science. It is to be deplored that ever there was one in the ranks of Christianity so openly displaying his little faith in religion as well as science, that he should have hurled one hostile bolt against science as an enemy to revelation. God has indelibly impressed himself upon His works as well as revealed

himself in His Word. The eternal truths of nature can not conflict with the eternal truths of the Bible. To depreciate nature with a view of exalting revelation is to degrade one part of God's works with a view of exalting another. So far from ignoring the Bible science has furnished a key to many of its most sublime and hidden mysteries. Science is to the Bible a trusty handmaid that has led the way through many treacherous snares of the infidel, and though he has often attempted to use science as a sword to combat Christianity it has ever glanced harmless from the shield inflicting a mortal wound on him who drew it. Then, oh Christian, fear not that science can ever prove detrimental to the cause of religion. The God of the Bible is surely the God of science. Where one leads the other is sure to follow. May they go hand in hand and refuse to be divorced.

Now I would call your attention for a moment to the fact, that, sin being introduced into the world by reason of his disobedience man became totally unfit for the designs of his great commission. But a remedy being instituted in the counsel chambers of the Eternal Three, a second commission was given to him, which involved turning his eyes to a crucified Redeemer, and then, under the guidance of this glorious Redeemer he was to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling." And we know that each step that man has taken in conformity with the designs of these two great commissions has been tending toward the perfection of one grand purpose—the complete welfare and happiness of the human race; and I maintain that a man will not have completed his share in the work designed in the great plan of creation, until science shall have discovered all the apartments of our richly furnished mansion, and shall have taught us to use all her treasures to the very best advantage, until "the scientist, having taken line after line, figure after figure, passed from proposition to proposition, riveted link after link, shall have bound the universe to the throne of God by that golden, everlasting chain whose strong embrace holds heaven, earth and man; and a man shall no longer "know in part, but bask in the perfect light of truth." And when, oh Christian scientist, the smoke of the final conflagration of all things have cleared away, and the new earth shall have come forth clothed in robes of transcendent splendor, the long lost glories of Eden being reinstated, and the bowers of sinless Paradise blooming again in all their beauty; when dark and mysterious clouds shall no longer obscure thy vision, but a brighter sun than ever thine eyes beheld at noonday shall pour forth its radiance upon thy path, then, we earnestly believe the work begun here amid so many difficulties will be resumed in the perfect light of day; that then, born on angelic wings thou shalt ascend the sacred mount of eternal truth and, gazing upon the peaceful bosom of the boundless ocean of almighty love, thy joyous work shall forever be to trace out its stormless shores, to measure its boundless extent and to fathom its fathomless depths.

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